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SOURCE Taegliche Rundschau.GDR DISTRICT COURTS SENTENCE PROFITEERS AND SPECULATORS

On 27 May 1953, Werner Hahn, 24 years of age, and Arthur Nestmann, 23 years of age, were given prison sentences of 12 and 7 years, respectively, by the District Court in Friedrichshain. The two men were guilty of crimes against the ordinance for the protection of intra-German trade. This trial again confirmed the fact that the vast majority of the people fleeing the GDR (German Democratic Republic) are criminal elements.

Hahn and Nestmann fled from the GDR in 1951 because they had committed crimes. After their escape, they immediately formed connections with one of the West Berlin racketeer centers. These centers, with the support of the West Berlin Senate, organize mass purchases of goods and raw materials of all types, to harm the economy of the GDR and the Democratic Sector of Berlin, and to disrupt the development of socialism. Hahn was the leader of a seven-member gang of buying agents, who systematically bought up valuable optical instruments in the HO (Trade Organization) stores of the GDR and the Democratic Sector of Berlin, and smuggled them into West Berlin. Nestmann was very useful to Hahn in connection with these criminal activities. The profiteers met regularly in a West Berlin gambling casino, which was frequented by the purchasers of the goods. Hahn attracted his backers and customers by means of advertisements, which, characteristically, appeared in the Telegraf (West Berlin newspaper).

The District Court in Berlin-Mitte also had to contend with two profiteers on 27 May 1953. Luise Faehnrich, 64 years of age, and Ernst Krause, 52 years of age, both of whom are East Berlin residents, had lived for months on the profits of their illegal transactions in foodstuffs. They made daily purchases of sugar, flour, and eggs in the HO stores of the Prenzlauer Berg area. They then transported these foodstuffs to West Berlin by concealing them in their clothing, and sold them at a Wochenmarkt [farmers' market]. The pair was finally arrested by a member of the People's Police; at the time, each of the accused was carrying 10 kilograms of foodstuffs on his person. The court sentenced Krause, who had a record of 15 previous convictions, and Faehnrich to prison terms of 6 and 4 years, respectively.

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- 1 -

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